

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY REVIEW

4 August 1960

CUBAN DEVELOPMENTS

Fidel Castro is evidently under the care of doctors, but the extent of his illness is uncertain. He remains the symbolic embodiment of the Cuban revolution to the Cuban masses,

upon whom the regime has come increasingly to depend, and should his health dictate that he step down, any likely interregnum or immediate successor would continue to rule in his name.

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Raul Castro--who has cut short his foreign tour--would be at least the nominal head of any immediate successor or caretaker regime.

There are indications that Fidel Castro's authority in the government may have been significantly reduced in recent weeks and that the pro-Communist clique headed by the ambitious and hard-driving "Che" Guevara may have gained correspondingly in power. Guevara, whose administrative abilities contrast sharply with Castro's own disorganized methods of governing, has become the virtual tsar of Cuba's state-directed economy and exerts considerable influence in other areas of government. A usually reliable source with high-level contacts in the regime reported in late July that Guevara had replaced Castro's bodyguards with his own personal guards. Concern over Castro's present state of mind is given as the reason for Guevara's reported action, which in effect would make Castro a prisoner.

President Dorticos, a former Communist who has never recanted, has shown himself to be a stronger personality than his figurehead status would imply, and he would become an even more influential figure if Fidel Castro should temporarily or permanently leave power.

The Argentine and Brazilian ambassadors in Havana--who have shown themselves unusually astute observers--are becoming convinced that Castro has become, in fact, a prisoner. Argentine Ambassador Amoedo, a personal friend of Castro's, reached that conclusion after meeting on 23 July with the Cuban premier.

Meanwhile, the Castro regime is faced with growing problems on a number of fronts. Though serious petroleum shortages do not appear imminent, early problems could come from a shortage of refinery spare parts and special lubricants. Soviet oil deliveries to date have not been sufficient to meet normal Cuban demand, but with careful allocation, supplies should be adequate to prevent a serious oil shortage.

Scheduled deliveries on both Soviet and free-world tankers reveal that oil shipments in August will considerably exceed the 155,000 tons delivered in July.

major Cuban air bases have been under orders since early July to submit daily fuel stock reports. Two naval bases reported that their supplies were exhausted.

Bombings and shootings are on the rise in Havana, and numerous orders for the arrest of "counterrevolutionaries" and investigation of acts of sabotage. A source with contacts in government circles reported in late July that the government has become aware of a conspiracy in the armed forces and is awaiting the opportune moment to arrest the conspirators.

On the international front, the virulent attacks on other hemisphere governments delivered

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by "Che" Guevara and others during the Communist-dominated Latin American Youth Congress have further aroused other Latin American governments against the Cuban regime. Venezuela, for instance, is formally protesting Guevara's description of President Betancourt as the "prisoner of his government's forces of repression." The Cuban charges may have repercussions at the forthcoming meeting of the OAS foreign ministers in Costa Rica. After convening on 16 August to discuss Venezuela's charges against the Trujillo dictatorship, the foreign ministers are to consider the dangers to the inter-American system posed by Cuba's increasingly close ties with the Sino-Soviet bloc.

Mexico, seeking to avoid a sharp clash in the OAS on this subject, has won at least initial Brazilian and Canadian support for a joint effort to "mediate the dispute between Cuba and the United States." Such an effort would appeal to some hemisphere governments such as Chile, but others--including Argentina, Colombia, and Peru and most of the Central American countries--appear to support the United States' view that OAS action is necessary to deal with the Cuban problem, since it is more than a Cuban-US dispute and involves a direct challenge to the inter-American system, for which all OAS members are responsible.

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